THE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CATERHAM.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health.

THE PRIORY,

CATERHAM VALLEY.

FEBRUARY, 1909.

To the Chairman and Members of the Urban District Council of Caterham.

GENTLEMEN,

As Medical Officer of Health I have the honour to present to you my Annual Report for the year 1908 for the District over which you preside:—

Area, Statistics and Population.

The area comprises 2438 acres, with a population of

For Caterham (estimated)	...	9850
Asylum (actual)	...	2115
Barracks ,,	...	993
TOTAL	...	12958

During the year there have been 212 births and 87 deaths, giving respectively a birth rate of 21.5 and a death rate of 8.8 per 1000 of the population. In estimating the above rates the populations of the Asylum and Barracks have been excluded. There have been twelve deaths of infants i.e. children under one year of age, during the year, only one death occurring as the result of infantile diarrhoea. The District is to be congratulated on its low infantile mortality, the result in my opinion being due to the much more careful feeding of infants which has obtained during the past few years. This being brought about by the operation of the Midwives Act. The presence of trained Midwives in the homes of the poorer people has influenced them for the good not only in the correct feeding of infants but in the hygienic management of their persons and houses. The distribution of cards on the feeding and management of infants by the Sanitary Committee of your Council has also been a help towards the happy result stated above.

The Notification of Births Act 1907 has not been adopted in this District.

Infectious Diseases.

During the year there have been reported 82 cases of infectious disease, viz:--61 cases of scarlet fever, 15 of erysipelas, 4 of diphtheria, 1 of enteric fever and 1 of puerperal fever.

Of the above cases 2 of scarlet fever and 8 of erysipelas were reported from the Metropolitan Asylum, the others all occurring in the District. Three of the cases of scarlet fever and 3 of diptheria unfortunately terminated fatally.

43 cases of scarlet fever and 1 of diphtheria were sent to the Croydon Rural Isolation Hospital for treatment, this District having an arrangement with the Croydon Rural District to take its infectious diseases. Some criticisms both from members of your Council and the Public were received as to the treatment of our cases in the Isolation Hospital, but after several visits to the Hospital I was satisfied that the conduct and state of the Institution were quite satisfactory in every respect. The incidence of scarlet fever in the District has been high during the year, the disease being prevalent in a mild form not only in this but in the surrounding Districts. Much could be done in the prevention of this disease if parents were more careful to send for medical assistance when the children develop "rashes." On three occasions when investigating the outbreaks of the disease during the past year I found that parents or guardians had failed to seek for medical opinion when obviously their children were suffering from scarlet fever. It is hard to believe that this neglect is always the result of ignorance.

The other cases of infectious disease call for no special comment. There has been only one case of puerperal fever and this case recovered.

Much happy progress has been made in the management of lying-in-women. This in my opinion, as before, has been due to the operation of the Midwives Act. The district is well supplied with trained and capable Midwives.

General Hygienic Proceedings.

The Main Drainage of the Hill portion of the District has been inaugurated and completed within the past 18 months, and has now been in working order for six months.

In addition to the Guards' Depot, with a population of about 1000, the number of houses connected with the sewers number 790, with a population of 4000. Nearly eleven miles of sewers have been provided.

The outfall works are designed for a population of 6000, and the two straining tanks to take 135,000 gallons per day dry weather flow. The five contact beds have a capacity of 90,000 gallons, so as to take one and a half fillings per day. There are five percolating beds with a water capacity of 90,000 gallons. The five sand filters have

an area of 546 square yards, so that approximately 250 gallons will be passed through each yard of sand filter.

There is no provision for storm water as the drainage is on the separate system, but with three fillings per day the works will treat twice the dry weather flow.

The total area of land acquired is about 31 acres. The sewage first passes into settling tanks which have been designed with an upward straining arrangement so as to convert all colloidal matters before they pass on to the contact beds. The contact beds deodorise the whole of the sewage from the settling tanks and from thence it passes through streaming beds with revolving sprinklers. After the liquid has left the sprinkling beds it passes through the sand filters for the purpose of clarification and removal of bacterial life in the sewage, and from the sand filters it is distributed over the irrigation area.

The sludge from the settling tanks is taken on to sludge beds, from whence it is removed when dry and sold to farmers.

The effluent is very pure and the works are giving satisfactory results. At present the number of gallons treated daily is about 70,000.

The work of emptying cesspools on the Hill has been discontinued, with the exception of a few houses on roads not sewered, and the old cesspools disinfected and filled in.

During the year 2316 cesspools have been emptied, and 3,974,000 gallons of sewage removed (after being deodorised) in closed vans to the sewage sites. In the future only the cesspools in the Valley district will require attention.

The sanitary defects remedied during the year are as follows :—

Drainage defects	-	54
Defective dustbins	-	42
Manure and offal nuisances	-	10
Defective walls and roofs	-	3
Insanitary dwellings	-	1
Insufficient water supply	-	1
Smoke nuisance	-	1
Sundry sanitary defects	-	6
TOTAL	-	118

The above figures do not deal with the whole of the drainage defects discovered during the year, as is most of the 790 houses up to the present connected with the new sewers the drains have been entirely relaid and old defective drains have been removed. Water has also been laid on to about 500 closets which previously were without water supply. No case of diphtheria or enteric fever has resulted in consequence of the conversion from the cesspool system to the main sewerage system.

Systematic inspection of the district has been carried out during the year, and on the whole the general sanitary condition is exceedingly good.

Houses, Overcrowding, etc.

The housing of the working classes is ample ; only 1 case of overcrowding has been dealt with during the year.

Elementary Schools.

As Medical Officer of Health the schools have been frequently inspected during the year, and concerted action has been taken where necessary with the Medical Officer appointed by the Surrey County Council, which in this District is the Local Education Authority. The medical inspection of children in the elementary Schools is carried out by the County Council.

Dairies, Cowsheds, Milkshops, Foods, etc.

There are 8 Cowkeepers and 13 Dairymen and purveyors of milk in the District.

Examinations prove that the milk, foods and drugs sold in the District are exceptionally good. No prosecutions have been necessary during the year.

The cattle sheds and milkshops comply with the Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops Order, as also the bye-laws of the District.

The Dairies and Cowsheds of the District have been repeatedly visited and are as a rule carefully kept. Some minor defects have been pointed out and remedied. No case of tuberculous milk has been dealt with.

Slaughter Houses.

The five slaughter houses in the District are kept in a clean and satisfactory condition.

Water Supply.

The periodical water analyses have been very satisfactory and proves its purity and freedom from pollution.

Factory and Workshops Act, 1901.

There are 5 Factories and 45 Workshops in the District. These are in compliance with the Act, and are well suited to their several purposes. Only one underground bakehouse exists in the District.

Removal of House Refuse.

The Council have removed 3179 loads of house refuse during the year.

In conclusion I would add my indebtedness to Mr. H. R. Martin, our Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector, not only for his indefatigable energy in dealing with all insanitary conditions and nuisances, but for his invaluable assistance in the various inspections and visits made during the year.

S. DAVEY,

Medical Officer of Health for the Urban District of Caterham.